



US009127326B2

(12) **United States Patent**
Metius et al.

(10) **Patent No.:** **US 9,127,326 B2**
(45) **Date of Patent:** ***Sep. 8, 2015**

(54) **SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR REDUCING IRON OXIDE TO METALLIC IRON USING NATURAL GAS**

(2013.01); **C21B 13/02** (2013.01); **C21B 2100/02** (2013.01); **C21B 2100/04** (2013.01); **C21B 2100/06** (2013.01); **Y02W 30/54** (2015.05)

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(58) **Field of Classification Search**
CPC **C21B 13/0073**; **C21B 13/02**
See application file for complete search history.

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Feb. 26, 2015 Office Action issued in U.S. Appl. No. 13/955,654.

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(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 127 days.

This patent is subject to a terminal disclaimer.

(21) Appl. No.: **14/069,493**

(22) Filed: **Nov. 1, 2013**

(65) **Prior Publication Data**

US 2014/0053686 A1 Feb. 27, 2014

Related U.S. Application Data

(63) Continuation-in-part of application No. 13/363,044, filed on Jan. 31, 2012, now Pat. No. 8,685,136, and a

(Continued)

(51) **Int. Cl.**
C21B 13/02 (2006.01)
C21B 5/00 (2006.01)
C21B 13/00 (2006.01)

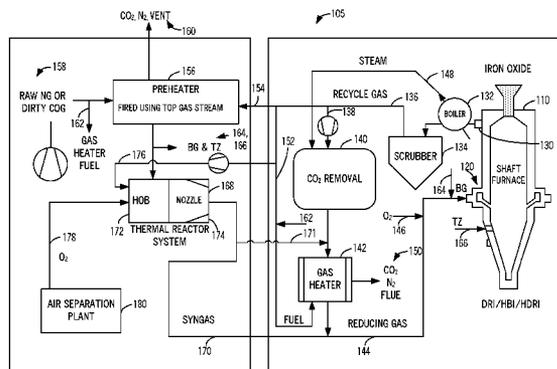
(52) **U.S. Cl.**
CPC **C21B 5/001** (2013.01); **C21B 13/0073**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

In various exemplary embodiments, the present invention provides systems and methods that can convert clean or raw natural gas, clean or dirty coke oven gas, or the like to reducing gas/syngas suitable for direct reduction with minimal processing or cleaning. Hydrocarbons and the like are converted to H₂ and CO. S does not affect the conversion to reducing gas/syngas, but is removed or otherwise cleaned up by the iron bed in the direct reduction shaft furnace. Top gas may be continuously recycled or a once-through approach may be employed.

34 Claims, 3 Drawing Sheets



Related U.S. Application Data

continuation-in-part of application No. 13/107,013, filed on May 13, 2011, now Pat. No. 8,496,730, application No. 14/069,493, which is a continuation-in-part of application No. 13/955,654, filed on Jul. 31, 2013, now Pat. No. 9,028,585.

(60) Provisional application No. 61/334,786, filed on May 14, 2010.

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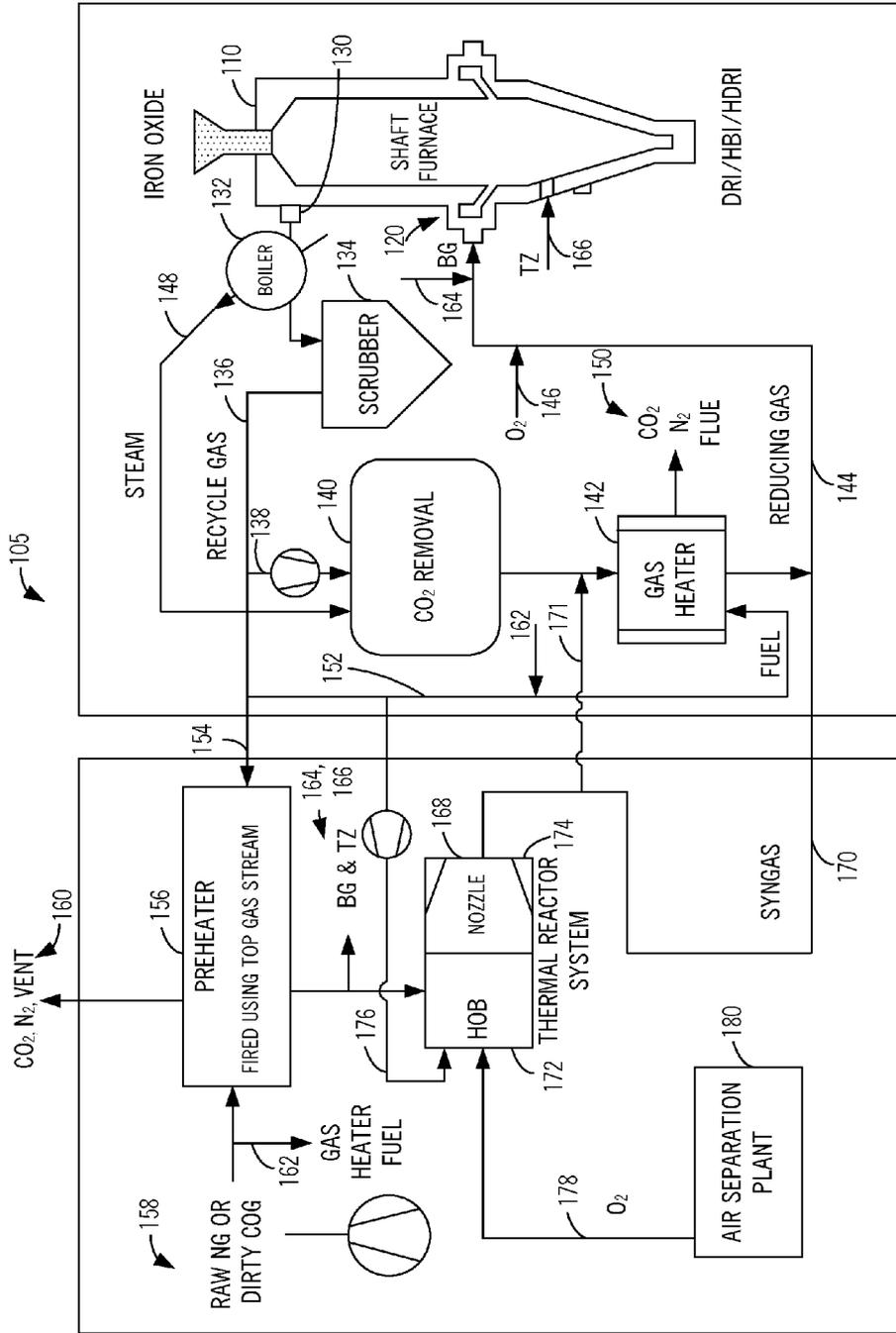


FIG. 1

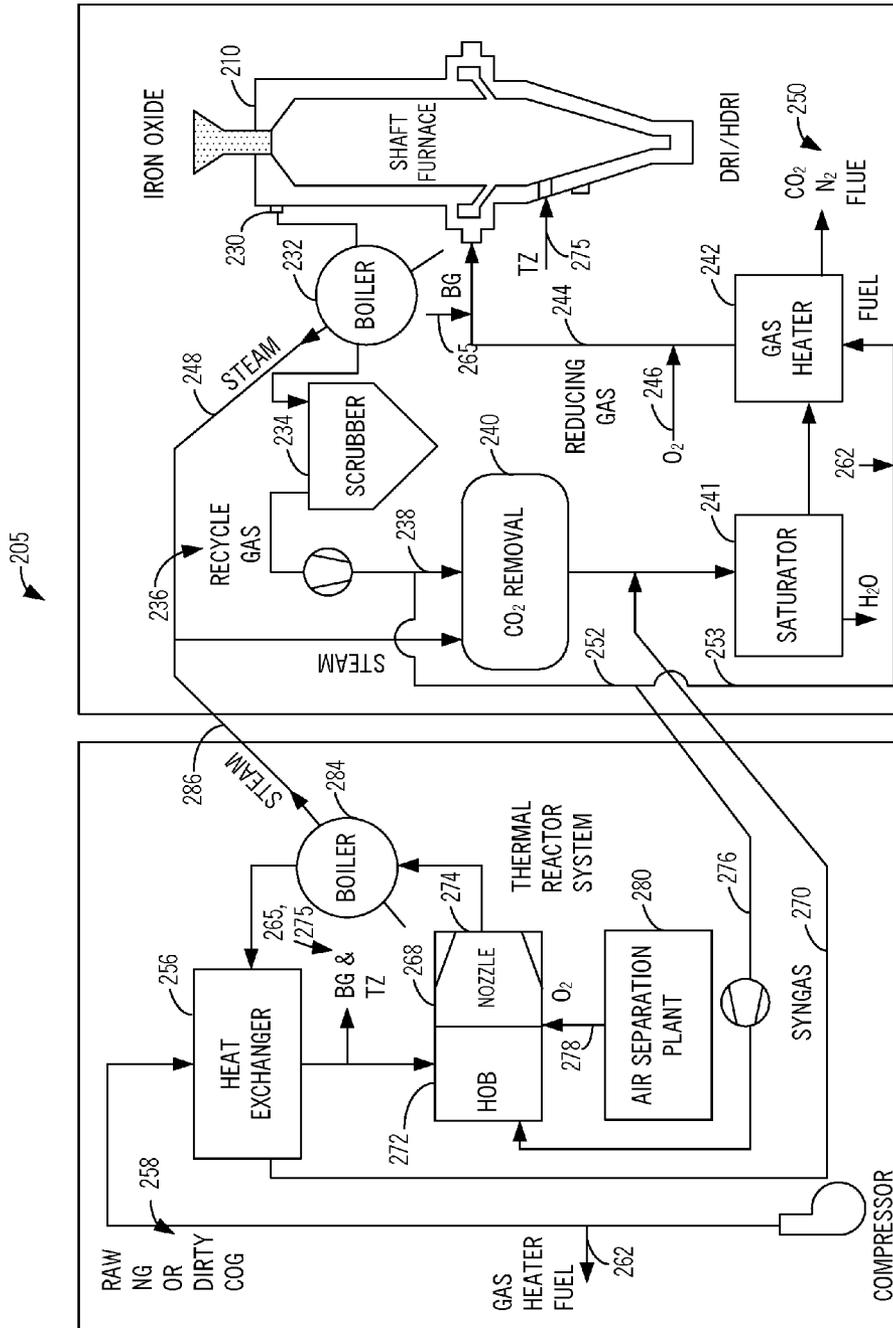


FIG. 2

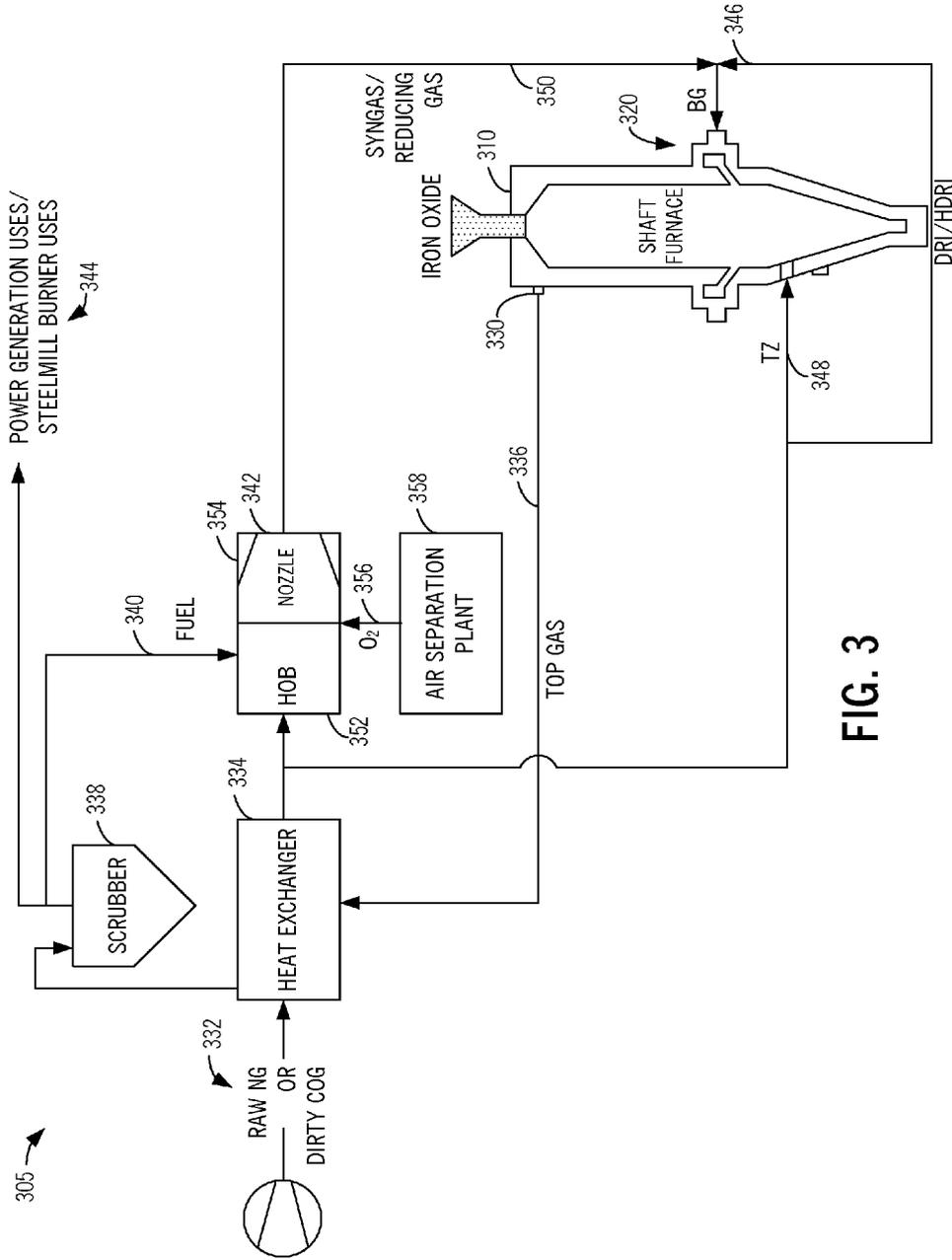


FIG. 3

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SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR REDUCING IRON OXIDE TO METALLIC IRON USING NATURAL GAS

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION(S)

The present patent application/patent is a continuation-in-part of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 13/955,654 now U.S. Pat. No. 9,028,585, filed on Jul. 31, 2013, and entitled "SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR REDUCING IRON OXIDE TO METALLIC IRON USING COKE OVEN GAS AND OXYGEN STEELMAKING FURNACE GAS," which is a continuation-in-part of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 13/363,044 now U.S. Pat. No. 8,685,136, filed on Jan. 31, 2012, and entitled "SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR REDUCING IRON OXIDE TO METALLIC IRON USING COKE OVEN GAS AND OXYGEN STEELMAKING FURNACE GAS," which is a continuation-in-part of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 13/107,013 now U.S. Pat. No. 8,496,730, filed on May 13, 2011, and entitled "SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR REDUCING IRON OXIDE TO METALLIC IRON USING COKE OVEN GAS AND OXYGEN STEELMAKING FURNACE GAS," which claims the benefit of priority of U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 61/334,786, filed on May 14, 2010, and entitled "SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR REDUCING IRON OXIDE TO METALLIC IRON USING COKE OVEN GAS AND OXYGEN STEELMAKING FURNACE GAS," the contents of all of which are incorporated in full by reference herein.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates generally to a novel system and method for reducing iron oxide to metallic iron using clean or raw (i.e. nearly well head) natural gas (NG), clean or dirty coke oven gas (COG), or the like. More specifically, the present invention utilizes a thermal reaction system (TRS) to reform the NG or the like with minimal processing or cleaning, such that a synthesis gas (syngas) suitable for direct reduction results.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Conventional reforming processes for the direct reduction (DR) of iron oxide to metallic iron utilize NG that has been processed or cleaned to remove impurities, such as hydrocarbons (gases and liquids), excess carbon dioxide (CO₂), sulfur (S), etc. Most reformers can handle some ethane (C₂H₆), propane (C₃H₈), butane (C₄H₁₀), and traces of C₅₊, but are primarily designed for reforming methane (CH₄) with a top gas, for example. S acts as a catalyst poison and can only be tolerated in low ppm quantities, in the range of 5 to 10 ppm.

Thus, what is still needed in the art are systems and methods that replace the reformer with an alternative component that can convert clean or raw NG, clean or dirty COG, or the like to reducing gas/syngas suitable for DR with minimal processing or cleaning. Hydrocarbons and the like would be converted to hydrogen (H₂) and carbon monoxide (CO). S would not affect the conversion to reducing gas/syngas, but would be removed or otherwise cleaned up by the iron bed in the DR shaft furnace.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

In various exemplary embodiments, the present invention provides precisely this—systems and methods that replace

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the reformer with an alternative component that can convert clean or raw NG, clean or dirty COG, or the like to reducing gas/syngas suitable for DR with minimal processing or cleaning. Hydrocarbons and the like are converted to H₂ and CO. S does not affect the conversion to syngas, but is removed or otherwise cleaned up by the iron bed in the DR shaft furnace. It should be noted that, direct reduced iron (DRI) contaminated with high levels of S may not be suitable as electric arc furnace (EAF) feedstock, but may be suitable as metalized feedstock to a blast furnace, for example.

In one exemplary embodiment, the present invention provides a method for reducing iron oxide to metallic iron, comprising: providing a top gas stream from a direct reduction shaft furnace; removing carbon dioxide from the top gas stream using a carbon dioxide removal system; heating the top gas stream in a gas heater to form a reducing gas stream and providing the reducing gas stream to the direct reduction shaft furnace to reduce the iron oxide to the metallic iron; and adding one of a natural gas stream and a coke oven gas stream to the reducing gas stream as a synthesis gas stream. The one of the natural gas stream and the coke oven gas stream comprises one or more of a hydrocarbon, hydrogen, carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, and sulfur. The method also comprises preheating the one of the natural gas stream and the coke oven gas stream in a preheater prior to adding the one of the natural gas stream and the coke oven gas stream to the reducing gas stream as the synthesis gas stream. The method further comprises reacting the preheated one of the natural gas stream and the coke oven gas stream in a thermal reaction system to form the synthesis gas stream. The thermal reaction system comprises a hot oxygen burner and a nozzle that utilize oxygen and a fuel. The oxygen is received from an air separation plant. The fuel comprises a portion of the top gas stream. The method still further comprises providing a portion of the one of the natural gas stream and the coke oven gas stream to the gas heater as fuel. The method still further comprises firing the preheater with a portion of the top gas stream. The method still further comprises providing a portion of the preheated one of the natural gas stream and the coke oven gas stream to the direct reduction shaft furnace as one or more of bustle enrichment gas and transition zone gas. The method still further comprises adding oxygen to the bustle gas. The method still further comprises generating steam in a boiler using sensible heat of the top gas stream and utilizing the steam in the (absorption type) carbon dioxide removal system. The method still further comprises providing a portion of the top gas stream to the gas heater as fuel.

In another exemplary embodiment, the present invention provides a method for reducing iron oxide to metallic iron, comprising: providing a top gas stream from a direct reduction shaft furnace; removing carbon dioxide from the top gas stream using a carbon dioxide removal system; removing moisture from the top gas stream using a saturator; heating the top gas stream in a gas heater to form a reducing gas stream and providing the reducing gas stream to the direct reduction shaft furnace to reduce the iron oxide to the metallic iron; and adding one of a natural gas stream and a coke oven gas stream to the top gas stream as a synthesis gas stream. The one of the natural gas stream and the coke oven gas stream comprises one or more of a hydrocarbon, hydrogen, carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, and sulfur. The method also comprises preheating the one of the natural gas stream and the coke oven gas stream in a heat exchanger to form the synthesis gas stream. The method further comprises reacting the preheated one of the natural gas stream and the coke oven gas stream in a thermal reaction system to form the synthesis gas stream. The thermal reaction system comprises a hot oxygen burner

and a nozzle that utilize oxygen and a fuel. The oxygen is received from an air separation plant. The fuel comprises a portion of the top gas stream. The method still further comprises cooling the preheated and reacted one of the natural gas stream and the coke oven gas stream in a boiler and the heat exchanger to form the synthesis gas stream. The method still further comprises providing a portion of the one of the natural gas stream and the coke oven gas stream to the gas heater as fuel. The heat exchanger operates by cross-exchange of the synthesis gas stream with one of the natural gas stream and the coke oven gas stream. The method still further comprises providing a portion of the preheated one of the natural gas stream and the coke oven gas stream to the direct reduction shaft furnace as one or more of bustle enrichment gas and transition zone gas. The method still further comprises generating steam in a first boiler using the top gas stream and utilizing the steam in the (absorption type) carbon dioxide removal system. The method still further comprises generating steam in a second boiler using the preheated and reacted one of the natural gas stream and the coke oven gas stream and utilizing the steam in the carbon dioxide removal system. The method still further comprises providing a portion of the top gas stream to the gas heater as fuel. The method still further comprises adding oxygen to the reducing gas stream.

In a further exemplary embodiment, the present invention provides a method for reducing iron oxide to metallic iron, comprising: providing one of a natural gas stream and a coke oven gas stream; preheating the one of the natural gas stream and the coke oven gas stream in a heat exchanger; reacting the preheated one of the natural gas stream and the coke oven gas stream in a thermal reaction system to form a reducing gas stream; and providing the reducing gas stream to a direct reduction shaft furnace to reduce the iron oxide to the metallic iron. The one of the natural gas stream and the coke oven gas stream comprises one or more of a hydrocarbon, hydrogen, carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, and sulfur. The thermal reaction system comprises a hot oxygen burner and a nozzle that utilize oxygen and a fuel. The oxygen is received from an air separation plant. The fuel comprises a portion of a top gas stream derived from the direct reduction shaft furnace that is cooled in the heat exchanger and cleaned in a scrubber. The one of the natural gas stream and the coke oven gas stream is preheated in the heat exchanger by cross-exchange with the top gas stream. The method also comprises providing a portion of the preheated one of the natural gas stream and the coke oven gas stream to the direct reduction shaft furnace as one or more of bustle enrichment gas and transition zone gas. The method further comprises utilizing a remaining portion of the cooled/cleaned top gas stream in one or more of a power generation system and a steelmaking facility.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The present invention is illustrated and described herein with reference to the various drawings, in which like reference numbers are used to denote like system components/method steps, as appropriate, and in which:

FIG. 1 is a schematic diagram illustrating one exemplary embodiment of the novel system and method for reducing iron oxide to metallic iron using clean or raw NG of the present invention—specifically, clean or raw NG is used in conjunction with a low-carbon (i.e. up to about 1-2%) DR plant, such as hot briquetted iron (HBI) plant or the like;

FIG. 2 is another schematic diagram illustrating an alternative exemplary embodiment of the novel system and method for reducing iron oxide to metallic iron using clean or raw NG of the present invention—specifically, clean or raw

NG is used in conjunction with a high-carbon (i.e. greater than about 2%) DR plant or the like; and

FIG. 3 is a schematic diagram illustrating one exemplary embodiment of a novel once-through (i.e. no recycle) system and method for reducing iron oxide to metallic iron using clean or raw NG of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

Referring now specifically to FIGS. 1-3, the systems and methods of the present invention include and utilize individual components that are well known to those of ordinary skill in the art, and thus they are not illustrated or described in detail herein. These individual components are, however, variously combined to form an inventive whole. The individual components include, but are not limited to, a conventional DR shaft furnace, boilers, coolers/scrubbers, CO₂ removal systems, compressors, saturators, gas heaters, heat exchangers, gas sources (and/or appropriate gas storage vessels), and the like.

In general, the DR shaft furnace **110, 210, 310** has an upper portion where iron ore in the form of pellets, lumps, agglomerates, etc. is fed. The reduced pellets, lumps, agglomerates, etc. are removed at a lower portion of the DR shaft furnace **110, 210, 310** as DRI. A reducing gas/syngas inlet **120, 220, 320** is located between the feed charge and the product discharge, and supplies hot reducing gas/syngas to the DR shaft furnace **110, 210, 310**. This hot reducing gas/syngas contains CH₄, which, conventionally, is reformed near the gas inlet **120, 220, 320** of the DR shaft furnace **110, 210, 310** by CO₂ and water (H₂O) contained in the hot reducing gas/syngas to produce additional H₂, CO, and carbon (C). The hot direct reduced iron (HDRI) acts as a catalyst in the reforming reaction. Following this reforming reaction, the hot reducing gas/syngas containing H₂ and CO reduces the iron oxide to metallic iron and exits the DR shaft furnace **110, 210, 310** as spent reducing gas (or top gas) through an offtake pipe at the top portion of the DR shaft furnace **10**. This top gas **130, 230, 330** may then be withdrawn and recycled for a variety of purposes.

As described above, in various exemplary embodiments, the present invention provides systems and methods that replace the conventional reformer with an alternative component that can convert clean or raw NG, clean or dirty COG, or the like to reducing gas/syngas suitable for DR with minimal processing or cleaning. Hydrocarbons and the like are converted to H₂ and CO. S does not affect the conversion to reducing gas/syngas, but is removed or otherwise cleaned up by the iron bed in the DR shaft furnace. Top gas may be continuously recycled or a once-through approach may be employed. Again, it should be noted that, DRI contaminated with high levels of S may not be suitable as EAF feedstock, but may be suitable as metalized feedstock to a blast furnace, for example.

Referring now specifically to FIG. 1, in one exemplary embodiment of the present invention, systems and methods **105** are provided for reducing iron oxide to metallic iron using clean or raw NG, clean or dirty COG, or the like in a low-carbon (up to about 1-2%) DR plant, such as an HBI plant or the like. This exemplary embodiment uses clean or raw NG, clean or dirty COG, or the like up to about 250 m³/t DRI for NG and 500-600 m³/t DRI for COG. Recycled top gas **130** is removed from the DR shaft furnace **110** and fed to a boiler **132** and cooler/scrubber **134** for steam generation, water removal, cooling, and/or cleaning, resulting in a recycled top gas **136** saturated at a temperature of between about 30 degrees C. and about 45 degrees C. This recycled top gas **136** is then split into multiple streams. The first stream **138** is fed

to an absorption type CO₂ removal unit **140** or the like, which removes about 95% of the CO₂ and S (as H₂S) from this first stream **138**, and a gas heater **142**, which heats the first stream **138** to a temperature of between about 900 degrees C. and about 1100 degrees C., thereby providing a reducing gas stream **144** that is fed into the DR shaft furnace **110**. Oxygen (O₂) **146** may be added to the reducing gas stream **144**, as necessary, prior to the reducing gas stream **144** being fed into the DR shaft furnace **110**. Optionally, the CO₂ removal unit **140** is a membrane type CO₂ removal unit, a pressure swing adsorption (PSA) unit, a vacuum pressure swing adsorption (VPSA) unit, etc. Steam **148** from the boiler **132** may be used by the absorption type CO₂ removal unit **140** or for other uses, including power generation. CO₂ and nitrogen (N₂) are also removed via the gas heater flue **150**, for example. The second stream **152** is used as gas heater fuel. The third stream **154** is used to fire a preheater **156**. A supply of compressed clean or raw NG, clean or dirty COG, or the like **158** is processed through the preheater **156**, and preheated to a temperature of between about 300 degrees C. and about 500 degrees C. Both CO₂ and N₂ **160** are vented, as necessary, through the preheater **156**. Prior to preheating, a portion of the NG or COG **158** may be used as gas heater fuel **162**. Advantageously, post-preheating, a portion of the NG or COG **158** may be provided to the DR shaft furnace **110** as bustle (enrichment) gas (BG) **164** and a portion of the NG or COG **158** may be delivered to the DR shaft furnace **110** as transition zone (TZ) gas **166**. The remainder of the NG or COG **158** is processed by a TRS **168** to form a syngas stream **170** that is added to the previously mentioned reducing gas stream **144**. A portion of the syngas stream **171** may be added to the inlet of the gas heater **142** to provide additional moisture, such that C buildup in the gas heater **142** is prevented. Preferably, the syngas stream **170** consists of at least about 82% H₂ and CO. In general, the TRS **168** includes a hot oxygen burner (HOB) **172** and a nozzle **174**. Fuel **176** derived from the recycled top gas stream **136** is combined with O₂ **178** from an air separation plant **180** or the like in the HOB **168** and, at high temperature (i.e. 2,000-2,500 degrees C.), is accelerated through the nozzle **174** and contacted with the NG or COG **158** to form the syngas stream **170**. The use of the NG or COG **158** in the BG and the TZ gas allows for control of the carbon content of the resulting DRI, as well as the temperature of the bed in the DR shaft furnace **110**.

Referring now specifically to FIG. 2, in another exemplary embodiment of the present invention, systems and methods **205** are provided for reducing iron oxide to metallic iron using clean or raw NG, clean or dirty COG, or the like in a high-carbon (greater than about 2%) DR plant or the like. Recycled top gas **230** is removed from the DR shaft furnace **210** and fed to a boiler **232** and cooler/scrubber **234** for steam generation, water removal, cooling, and/or cleaning, resulting in a recycled top gas **236** saturated at a temperature of between about 30 degrees C. and about 45 degrees C. This recycled top gas **236** is then split into multiple streams. The first stream **238** is fed to an absorption type CO₂ removal unit **240** or the like, which removes about 95% of the CO₂ and S (as H₂S) from this first stream **238**, a saturator **241**, which removes H₂O from this first stream **238**, and a gas heater **242**, which heats the first stream **238** to a temperature of between about 900 degrees C. and about 1100 degrees C., thereby providing a reducing gas stream **244** that is fed into the DR shaft furnace **210**. O₂ **246** may be added to the reducing gas stream **244**, as necessary, prior to the reducing gas stream **244** being fed into the DR shaft furnace **210**. Optionally, the CO₂ removal unit **240** is a membrane type CO₂ removal unit, a PSA unit, a VPSA unit, etc. Steam **248** from the boiler **232**

may be used by the absorption type CO₂ removal unit **240** or for other uses, including power generation. CO₂ and N₂ are also removed via the gas heater flue **250**, for example. The second stream **253** is used as gas heater fuel. A supply of compressed clean or raw NG, clean or dirty COG, or the like **258** is processed through a heat exchanger **256**, and preheated to a temperature of between about 300 degrees C. and about 500 degrees C. Optionally, the heat exchanger **256** operates by cross-exchange with a still heated syngas **270**, as described in greater detail below. Prior to preheating, a portion of the NG or COG **258** may be used as gas heater fuel **262**. Again, a portion of the preheated NG or COG **258** may be delivered to the DR shaft furnace **210** as BG **265** and a portion of the preheated NG or COG **258** may be delivered to the DR shaft furnace **210** as TZ gas **275**. Again, the remainder of the preheated NG or COG **258** is processed by a TRS **268** to form the heated syngas **270**. Preferably, the heated syngas **270** consists of at least about 82% H₂ and CO and is generated by the TRS **268** and a recycle loop including the TRS **268**, a boiler **284** (which also generates steam **286** for use in the CO₂ removal unit **240**), and the heat exchanger **256**, which cools the preheated and reacted NG or COG stream to form the syngas **270**. In general, the TRS **268** includes an HOB **272** and a nozzle **274**. Fuel **276** derived from the recycled top gas stream **252** is combined with O₂ **278** from an air separation plant **280** or the like in the HOB **272** and, at high temperature (i.e. 2,000-2,500 degrees C.), is accelerated through the nozzle **274** and contacted with the preheated NG or COG **258** to form the syngas stream **270**. The syngas stream **270** is preferably combined with the reducing gas stream **244** between the CO₂ removal unit **240** and the saturator **241**. However, in all exemplary embodiments, it should be noted that the syngas stream **270** (**170** in FIG. 1), if it contains high levels of CO₂ and/or S, can be advantageously introduced upstream of the CO₂ removal unit **240** (**140** in FIG. 1), to remove excess CO₂ and/or H₂S. Again, O₂ **246** may be added to the reducing gas stream **244** prior to injection into the DR shaft furnace **210**. In this embodiment, given the higher carbon content involved, less H₂O is desirable in order to have the proper ratio of reducing gases to oxidizing gases. Thus, the approximately 1,200-degree C. temperature leaving the TRS **268** is reduced to approximately 400-600 degrees C. by the boiler **284**, which is reduced to approximately 200 degrees C. by the heat exchanger **256**. The saturator **241** then takes the approximately 12%-H₂O syngas stream **270** and, when combined with the recycled top gas stream **238**, reduces the moisture content to approximately 2-6%. Again, the use of the NG or COG **258** in the BG and the TZ gas allows for control of the carbon content of the resulting DRI, as well as the temperature of the bed in the DR shaft furnace **210**.

Referring now specifically to FIG. 3, in a further exemplary embodiment of the present invention, systems and methods **305** are provided for reducing iron oxide to metallic iron using clean or raw NG, clean or dirty COG, or the like on a once-through (i.e. no recycle) basis. This alternative exemplary embodiment allows clean or raw NG, clean or dirty COG, or the like to be used to both produce metallic iron and generate power, as well as in a steelmaking facility, in applications where such multi-functionality desired. A supply of compressed NG or COG **332** is processed through a heat exchanger **334**, and heated to a temperature of between about 300 degrees C. and about 500 degrees C. A spent top gas stream **336** is cooled and/or cleaned in the heat exchanger **334** and a scrubber **338** and the resulting gas stream may be used as fuel **340** for a TRS **342** or the like and/or for power generation/steelmill burners **344**. Again, a portion of the heated NG or COG **332** may be delivered to the DR shaft furnace **310**

as BG enrichment **346** and a portion of the heated NG or COG **332** may be delivered to the DR shaft furnace **310** as TZ gas **348**. The remainder of the heated NG or COG **332** is processed by the TRS **342** to form a syngas/reducing gas stream **350**. Preferably, the syngas/reducing gas stream **350** consists of a reductant-to-oxidant ratio of about 5-to-6. In general, the TRS **342** includes an HOB **352** and a nozzle **354**. Fuel **340** derived from the heat exchanger **334**, for example, is combined with O₂ **356** from an air separation plant **358** or the like in the HOB **352** and, at high temperature (i.e. 2,000-2,500 degrees C.), is accelerated through the nozzle **354** and contacted with the compressed heated NG or COG **332** to form the syngas/reducing gas stream **350**. Again, the use of the NG or COG **332** in the BG and the TZ gas allows for control of the carbon content of the resulting DRI, as well as the temperature of the bed in the DR shaft furnace **310**.

As described above, in various exemplary embodiments, the present invention provides systems and methods that replace the conventional reformer with an alternative component that can convert clean or raw NG, clean or dirty COG, or the like to reducing gas/syngas suitable for DR with minimal processing or cleaning Hydrocarbons and the like are converted to H₂ and CO. S does not affect the conversion to reducing gas/syngas, but is removed or otherwise cleaned up by the iron bed in the DR shaft furnace. Top gas may be continuously recycled or a once-through approach may be employed. Again, it should be noted that, DRI contaminated with high levels of S may not be suitable as EAF feedstock, but may be suitable as metalized feedstock to a blast furnace, for example.

Although the present invention has been illustrated and described herein with reference to preferred embodiments and specific examples thereof, it will be readily apparent to those of ordinary skill in the art that combinations of these embodiments and examples and other embodiments and examples may perform similar functions and/or achieve like results. All such equivalent embodiments and examples are within the spirit and scope of the present invention, are contemplated thereby, and are intended to be covered by the following claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A method for reducing iron oxide to metallic iron, comprising:

providing a top gas stream from a direct reduction shaft furnace;

removing carbon dioxide from the top gas stream using a carbon dioxide removal system;

heating the top gas stream in a gas heater to form a reducing gas stream and providing the reducing gas stream to the direct reduction shaft furnace to reduce the iron oxide to the metallic iron, wherein a portion of the top gas stream is provided to the gas heater as fuel; and

adding one of a natural gas stream and a coke oven gas stream to the reducing gas stream as a synthesis gas stream.

2. The method of claim **1**, wherein the one of the natural gas stream and the coke oven gas stream comprises one or more of a hydrocarbon, hydrogen, carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, and sulfur.

3. The method of claim **1**, further comprising preheating the one of the natural gas stream and the coke oven gas stream in a preheater prior to adding the one of the natural gas stream and the coke oven gas stream to the reducing gas stream as the synthesis gas stream.

4. The method of claim **3**, further comprising reacting the preheated one of the natural gas stream and the coke oven gas stream in a thermal reaction system to form the synthesis gas stream.

5. The method of claim **4**, wherein the thermal reaction system comprises an oxygen burner and a nozzle and utilizes oxygen and a fuel.

6. The method of claim **5**, wherein the oxygen is received from an air separation plant.

7. The method of claim **5**, wherein the fuel comprises a portion of the top gas stream.

8. The method of claim **3**, further comprising firing the preheater with a portion of the top gas stream.

9. The method of claim **3**, further comprising providing a portion of the preheated one of the natural gas stream and the coke oven gas stream to the direct reduction shaft furnace as one or more of bustle enrichment gas and transition zone gas.

10. The method of claim **9**, further comprising adding oxygen to the bustle enrichment gas.

11. The method of claim **1**, further comprising providing a portion of the one of the natural gas stream and the coke oven gas stream to the gas heater as fuel.

12. The method of claim **1**, further comprising generating steam in a boiler using sensible heat of the top gas stream and utilizing the steam in the carbon dioxide removal system.

13. A method for reducing iron oxide to metallic iron, comprising:

providing a top gas stream from a direct reduction shaft furnace;

removing carbon dioxide from the top gas stream using a carbon dioxide removal system;

subsequently removing moisture from one or more of the top gas stream and a synthesis gas stream using a saturator;

subsequently heating the top gas stream in a gas heater to form a reducing gas stream, adding oxygen to the reducing gas stream, and providing the reducing gas stream to the direct reduction shaft furnace to reduce the iron oxide to the metallic iron; and

adding one of a natural gas stream and a coke oven gas stream to the top gas stream as the synthesis gas stream.

14. The method of claim **13**, wherein the one of the natural gas stream and the coke oven gas stream comprises one or more of a hydrocarbon, hydrogen, carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, and sulfur.

15. The method of claim **13**, further comprising preheating the one of the natural gas stream and the coke oven gas stream in a heat exchanger to form the synthesis gas stream.

16. The method of claim **15**, further comprising reacting the preheated one of the natural gas stream and the coke oven gas stream in a thermal reaction system to form the synthesis gas stream.

17. The method of claim **16**, wherein the thermal reaction system comprises an oxygen burner and a nozzle and utilizes oxygen and a fuel.

18. The method of claim **17**, wherein the oxygen is received from an air separation plant.

19. The method of claim **17**, wherein the fuel comprises a portion of the top gas stream.

20. The method of claim **16**, further comprising cooling the preheated and reacted one of the natural gas stream and the coke oven gas stream in a boiler and the heat exchanger to form the synthesis gas stream.

21. The method of claim **16**, further comprising generating steam in a second boiler using the preheated and reacted one of the natural gas stream and the coke oven gas stream and utilizing the steam in the carbon dioxide removal system.

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22. The method of claim 15, wherein the heat exchanger operates by cross-exchange with the synthesis gas stream.

23. The method of claim 15, further comprising providing a portion of the preheated one of the natural gas stream and the coke oven gas stream to the direct reduction shaft furnace as one or more of bustle enrichment gas and transition zone gas.

24. The method of claim 13, further comprising providing a portion of the one of the natural gas stream and the coke oven gas stream to the gas heater as fuel.

25. The method of claim 13, further comprising generating steam in a first boiler using the top gas stream and utilizing the steam in the carbon dioxide removal system.

26. The method of claim 13, further comprising providing a portion of the top gas stream to the gas heater as fuel.

27. A method for reducing iron oxide to metallic iron, comprising:

providing one of a natural gas stream and a coke oven gas stream;

preheating the one of the natural gas stream and the coke oven gas stream in a heat exchanger;

reacting the preheated one of the natural gas stream and the coke oven gas stream in a thermal reaction system to form a reducing gas stream; and

providing the reducing gas stream to a direct reduction shaft furnace to reduce the iron oxide to the metallic iron.

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28. The method of claim 27, wherein the one of the natural gas stream and the coke oven gas stream comprises one or more of a hydrocarbon, hydrogen, carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, and sulfur.

29. The method of claim 27, wherein the thermal reaction system comprises an oxygen burner and a nozzle and utilizes oxygen and a fuel.

30. The method of claim 29, wherein the oxygen is received from an air separation plant.

31. The method of claim 29, wherein the fuel comprises a portion of a top gas stream derived from the direct reduction shaft furnace that is cooled in the heat exchanger and cleaned in a scrubber.

32. The method of claim 31, wherein the one of the natural gas stream and the coke oven gas stream is preheated in the heat exchanger by cross-exchange with the top gas stream.

33. The method of claim 31, further comprising utilizing a remaining portion of the cooled/cleaned top gas stream in one or more of a power generation system and a steelmaking facility.

34. The method of claim 27, further comprising providing a portion of the preheated one of the natural gas stream and the coke oven gas stream to the direct reduction shaft furnace as one or more of bustle enrichment gas and transition zone gas.

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